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Forum to explore a regional approach on voluntary third-party assurance programmes (vTPA)

UNIDO REGIONAL CONSULTATION IN THE ARAB REGION

Amman, Jordan, September 2022

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Executive Summary

Contaminated food causes illness in about 600 million people and 420 000 deaths each year. Furthermore, it also has a major impact on the economy of countries that rely on exports of their food products. Food business operators must ensure that consumers' health is preserved by producing food that is safe and nutritious, while competent authorities establish and maintain legal requirements and verify that food producers comply with them to ensure consumer protection and fair practices in the food trade. However, with the growing scale and complexity of the food supply chain and limited resources and personnel, competent authorities are finding it more challenging to ensure the control and verification of all FBOs in a country. The information and data generated by industry voluntary third-party assurance programmes (vTPA) can support food safety regulatory authorities address these challenges. The additional industry conformity data can be used to help target official inspections to the areas of highest risk, improving the efficiency of the use of the national food control system's resources.

The Forum on voluntary third-party assurance programmes organized from August 30 to September 1, 2022 in Amman, Jordan, brought together representatives of competent authorities, food production companies and accreditation bodies from 13 Arab countries to promote consultation and discussion on a possible implementation of a regional vTPA approach.

After introductory presentations on the concept of vTPA, given by experts from the UK, UNIDO, the CEO of a vTPA program and the Chair of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Forum participants explored the concept of a regional vTPA approach in a series of workshops and panel discussions. The different stakeholder groups concluded to endorse the initiative for the region and to collaborate for its implementation seeing it as an opportunity to improve their food control systems, and strengthen public-private partnerships. The Forum also identified challenges that need to be addressed before the vTPA approach can be applied.

Highlights

UNIDO regional consultation on the implementation of the vTPA approach in the Arab region



55 Participants



UNIDO, Sida, UKFSA, Red Tractor, ARAC & ARABFFI



August 30th - Septeber 1st 2022



W Hotel - Aman, Jordan

ACRONYMS

AHDB	<i>Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board in the UK</i>
AIDSMO	<i>Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization</i>
AOAD	<i>Arab Organization for Agricultural Development</i>
ArabFFI	<i>Arab Federation of Food Industries</i>
ARAC	<i>Arab Accreditation Body</i>
ATF	<i>Arab Task Force of Food Safety</i>
BSE	<i>Bovine spongiform encephalopathy</i>
CA	<i>Competent Authority</i>
DALYs	<i>Disability-adjusted life years</i>
FAO	<i>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</i>
FBO	<i>Food Business Operators</i>
ISO	<i>International Organization FOR Standardization</i>
NFCS	<i>National Food Control System</i>
Sida	<i>Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)</i>
STDF	<i>Standards and Trade Development Facility</i>
UNIDO	<i>United Nations Industrial Development Organization</i>
UKFSA	<i>Food Standards Agency of the United Kingdom</i>
vTPA	<i>Voluntary third-party assurance programme</i>
WHO	<i>World Health Organization</i>

Background

The World Health Organization estimates that contaminated food causes illness in about 600 million people and 420 000 deaths each year. This results in the loss of 33 million healthy life years, also known as DALYs. Furthermore, in an era of increasing free trade, unsafe or contaminated food also has a major impact on the economy of countries that rely on exports of their food products. Focusing on and effectively managing Food Safety issues and food standards is therefore vital to protect consumers' health and promote trade between and within regions. Food business operators (FBO) have the most critical role and responsibility to ensure that consumers' health is preserved by producing food that is safe and nutritious. To do so, they have to implement food safety management systems and comply with food safety regulatory requirements. In addition, as it is increasingly in demand by sectors such as retail, more and more companies in the food sector are voluntarily choosing to use food safety and quality assurance programmes, including voluntary third-party assurance programmes (vTPA), to demonstrate compliance with regulatory requirements.

"A voluntary third-party assurance programme (vTPA) has been defined by Codex as "an autonomous scheme comprising of the ownership of a standard that may utilize national/international requirements; a governance structure for certification and conformity assessment that provides for periodic onsite audits of FBO operations for conformity with the standard, and in which FBO participation is voluntary".

¹

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/food-safety>

Competent authorities (CA) are responsible for establishing and maintaining legal requirements, as well as verifying that food producers comply with them to ensure consumer protection and fair practices in the food trade. However, with the growing scale and complexity of the food supply chain and limited resources and personnel, competent authorities are finding it more challenging to ensure the control and verification of all FBOs in a country.

The Codex Principles and Guidelines for National Food Control Systems (NFCS), CAC/GL 82-2013 state the rationale that CA may take into account quality assurance systems in their national food control system to support their regulatory controls. One possible way to do this is through an agreement between the CA and the vTPA owner to use the information/data generated by the vTPA program, provided that the CA is satisfied that the information and data they intend to use is reliable and fit for purpose.

The information and data generated by industry voluntary third-party assurance programmes (vTPA) can support food safety regulatory authorities target their official inspections to the areas of highest risk, improving the efficiency of the use of the national food control system's resources.

As more countries recognize the use of vTPAs to support the objectives of their national food control systems, the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems adopted in November 2021 the "Codex Principles and Guidelines for the Assessment and Use of Voluntary Third-Party Assurance (vTPA) Programmes". The purpose of the Guidelines is to assist competent authorities in their consideration

¹

[PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES FOR NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS- CAC/GL 82-2013](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/food-safety)

of vTPA programmes and how its information and data can potentially support national food control system objectives.

In this context, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), in cooperation with the Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO), with funding from the Kingdom of Sweden represented by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), held the first Arab regional forum on voluntary third-party assurance programmes, vTPA, from August 30 to September 1, 2022 in Amman, Jordan. It is no coincidence that the region has been chosen to discuss the possible opportunities and benefits for the different stakeholders on the use of vTPA. Previously, as part of efforts to address intra-regional trade challenges in the Arab region, UNIDO implemented the project “Strengthening regional trade capacity in the food sector by harmonizing conformity assessment mechanisms and food safety systems at the regional level”,

known as the “SAFE Initiative”, funded also by Sida.

The initiative, implemented in partnership with AIDSMO and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), aimed to structure some of the core competencies and tasks for coordinating food safety related matters in the Arab region. These included food safety standard setting, risk assessment activities, the setting of a joint rapid alert system for information exchange and notification of food and feed related incidents, as well as the development of common approaches for food import/export certification and related procedures.

With the objective of achieving economies of scale through the creation of public-private partnerships, the aim of the Forum was to promote consultation and discussion among regional food safety competent authorities, food production companies and accreditation bodies on vTPA programmes to identify the priorities and action needed to implement a regional vTPA approach that will benefit



Participants of the UNIDO Regional Consultation in the Arab Region

the food industry, regulators, accreditation bodies and ultimately consumers.

The Forum

Objectives

The main objective of the Forum on voluntary third-party assurance programmes, vTPA, was to introduce and improve awareness of the concept and mechanisms of “voluntary third-party assurance” based on the newly adopted Codex Guidelines, as well as conducting regional consultation on the practical implementation of the vTPA approach to promote regional integration. In particular, the Forum was intended to:

- Assess the appropriateness of implementing voluntary third-party assurance approaches in different countries in the Arab region;
- Use a set of business development and enterprise development tools to

implement a voluntary third-party assurance approach;

- Identify best response strategies and lessons learned from countries that have implemented voluntary third-party assurance approaches;
- Identify competent national and regional authorities to support the implementation of voluntary third-party assurance mechanism in the Arab region.

Participants

Some 55 representatives of competent authorities, food production companies and accreditation bodies from 13 Arab countries participated in the event. Table 1 summarizes the representation of attendees and experts to the forum.

Table 1. Summary of participants of the Forum on voluntary third-party assurance programmes. For more information, see Annex 1.

International organizations and institutions	Arab regional organizations	Countries	
1. Codex Alimentarius 2. UK Food Standards Agency 3. Red Tractor Food Control System 4. Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency 5. United Nations Industrial Development Organization	1. League of Arab States- Arab economic integration management 2. Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization 3. Arab Organization for Agricultural Development 4. Arab Food Industries Union	1. Jordan 2. United Arab Emirates 3. Algeria 4. Saudi Arabia 5. Sudan 6. Morocco 7. Yemen	8. Tunisia 9. Palestine 10. Qatar 11. Lebanon 12. Libya 13. Egypt 14. Sweden 15. United Kingdom

Content of the Forum

On Tuesday, August 30, participants were invited to a welcome and introductory dinner where Ali Badarneh, head of the Food Security and Food Systems unit of UNIDO, explained the objectives and dynamics of the forum. In an informal talk, Mr. Badarneh explained the idea of the vTPA approach and the benefits it can potentially bring to CAs and FBOs under the rationale that, a business demonstrating compliance with a reliable vTPA programme, can be judged by the CA as likely to be in compliance with the requirements of relevant food safety regulation.

The Forum officially started on the 31st of August with the welcome and opening remarks by Ms. Sulafa Mdanat, UNIDO country representative in Jordan. In her speech, reference was made to the generous

support of Sida to expand the untapped potential of inter-regional trade in the League of Arab States and to the fact that that cooperation and harmonization among member states is critical for a successful execution of a regional vTPA approach.

The official inauguration of the event took place after the opening remarks by the following personalities:

- Ms. Shadwa Saad, Head of Standardization and Metrology Center, AIDSMO;
- Mr. Steve Wearne, Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission;
- Amina Mohamed, Chairperson of the Arab Accreditation Body (ARAC);
- Mr. Khaled Alsulaiti, Chairperson of the Arab Task Force of Food Safety (ATF);
- Mr. Hayssam Jaffan, President of the Arab Federation of Food Industries (ArabFFI);
- Ms. Maria Selin, Regional Director of Development Cooperation, Embassy of Sweden in Amman.



Opening of the Forum

PRESENTATION 1 - Introduction to vTPA and its regulatory use in the UK: Practical experience and issues

John Barnes, UNIDO Senior Expert. Former Head of Local Delivery, UK Food Standards Agency

The presentation of Mr. Barnes began with a simplified definition of voluntary third-party assurance programmes, as “formal and documented food safety/quality control systems that are generally developed and put in place by the industry with independent assurance of a member establishment’s conformance with their specified standard”. He explained how, in the United Kingdom, the regulatory use of industry vTPA program information began after problems with regulatory capacity and capability in the UK feed sector. As the sector was very well served by accredited industry vTPA schemes, all of which incorporated relevant legal requirements into their standards, specific feed vTPA conformity data was integrated into regulatory decision-making. The formal process was call ‘Earned Recognition’ and it allowed the frequency of regulatory inspections at approved vTPA member businesses to be reduced on the basis they were more likely to be compliant with feed law. This also enabled significantly improved targeting of regulatory resources to higher risk feed businesses. With the continued increase both in the number of UK food premises and consumer expectations in terms of food safety and quality, the UK is exploring how the approach can be extended from the 3 food and feed sectors it currently operates in, to make the best use of finite regulatory resources. The expert concluded his presentation by emphasizing that, while checks on the independence, governance and integrity of a vTPA programme can provide confidence to competent authorities

on the reliability and possible regulatory use of its data they do not replace the need for regulatory controls. The additional information and data is to better inform and target regulatory controls, not replace them.



John Barnes, UNIDO Senior Expert

PRESENTATION 2 – Codex vTPA guidelines: CXG 93-2021

Mike O’Neil, Head of Codex Policy and Strategy, Food Standards Agency of the United Kingdom (UKFSA)

Mr. O’Neil, who chaired the Codex working group that developed the new Codex vTPA Guidelines, gave a presentation on the “Codex Principles and Guidelines for the Assessment and Use of Voluntary Third-Party Assurance (vTPA) Programmes”. He told the forum that they were developed to agree a harmonized international framework for the use of vTPA



Mike O’Neil, Head of Codex Policy and Strategy, UKFSA

programmes by competent authorities. He spoke about their origin and their rapid adoption, which he said was possible thanks to the commitment and support of Codex member countries, and the perceived need for reliable information sharing between vTPA programmes and competent authorities to support and strengthen NFCS. Mr. O’Neil introduced the structure of the guidelines to help participants understand the approach of vTPA programmes and the relationship between the different sections in the Guidelines and the different actors involved. He spoke about the criteria listed in the document, which are intended to help competent authorities effectively assess vTPA programmes to ensure the information can be relied on when used in regulatory decision-making. He gave examples of the

benefits in using information from vTPA programmes. These included reducing the frequency or intensity of official controls, better targeting of resources to higher risk businesses and the identification of trends and issues related to non-conformities in specific sectors or individual FBOs. Mr O’Neil spoke of the need to establish good partnerships and formal mechanisms to exchange information and data to ensure the proper functioning of the approach. However, he stressed that participation in a vTPA approach remains voluntary for both competent authorities and owners of vTPA programmes.

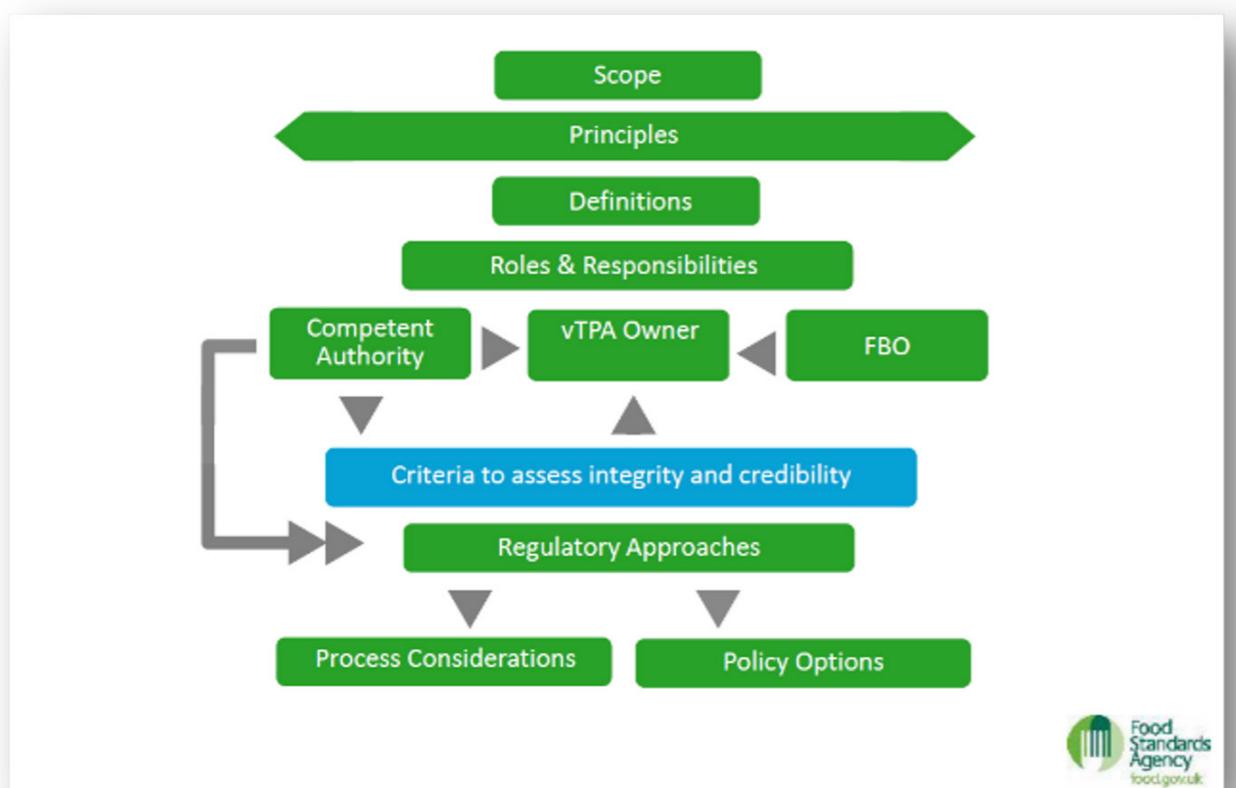


Figure 1. Summary of the vTPA guidelines presented by Mike O’Neil

PRESENTATION 3 – Red Tractor: UK voluntary third-party assurance

by Jim Moseley, CEO of Red Tractor

The Red Tractor scheme is a voluntary certification scheme for the UK primary sector, owned by the UK food chain, operating on a not-for profit basis.

47,000 farms and 800 processors and packers in the UK are certified against the Red Tractor vTPA programme. That represents 80% of all UK agricultural production. Members are independently audited every 12 to 18 months

Mr. Moseley began his presentation by underlining a key difference between the Red Tractor programme and other vTPA programmes. In addition to meeting supplier requirements, the Red Tractor vTPA scheme is also consumer facing, with the Red Tractor logo prominently displayed on retail food packaging as a trusted mark for customers on the food’s quality and safety. This reflects that the programme was established to respond to the loss of consumer confidence in UK food products following a series of high profile food safety incidents, including Salmonella in eggs and Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE).

The Red Tractor scheme, as with other vTPA schemes, is administered independently and is not required by national legislation. It is owned by the industry, including the UK Farming Unions, Agriculture & Horticulture Development Board, Dairy UK, British Retail Consortium and the UK Food and Drink Federation participate as observers. The scheme covers about 80% of all the primary production in the UK and by developing specific standards incorporating all relevant food safety legislation, it provides independent assurance and certification of conformance at every stage in the supply

chain. In the case of poultry, as an example, Red Tractor certification is applied from the feed fed to the chicks, at slaughter and cutting plants, right up to the retailer.

Mr. Moseley explained how independent certification bodies that conform to ISO 17065 are licensed to assess and certify farmers, transporters, processors or packagers. The robustness of the scheme is proven by the level of compliance with the programme standards. Farmers or producers with major non-conformances not corrected within the specified time period or with major food safety issues will have their certificate withdrawn.

He emphasized the important role of accreditation bodies. In the UK, the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS), licenses certification bodies for the Red Tractor vTPA programme, ensuring the quality and independence of the audits carried out.

Mr. Moseley concluded his presentation by talking about the benefits of sharing Red Tractor conformance data with government and how it has allowed competent authorities to better target their resources, helping to improve food safety and consumer protection whilst reducing the number of inspections of compliant farmers and producers. The formal agreement between Red Tractor and Food Standards Agency has significantly reduced unnecessary duplication and more importantly, has improved food safety and consumer confidence in the sector, with surveys now showing UK consumers trust UK food more than any other and the Red Tractor logo being the most trusted safety and quality mark in the sector.

PRESENTATION 4 – National experience of implementation of a vTPA approach

Steve Wearne, Chair of Codex Alimentarius

Commission & Director of Global Affairs,
Food Standards Agency, United Kingdom



Steve Wearne, Chair of Codex Alimentarius Commission & Director of Global Affairs, UKFSA

Mr. Wearne began his presentation by referring to the results of the survey conducted in 2020 by UNIDO and the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF), which found that 24 countries were already using information from vTPA programmes, demonstrating the growing interest regulators have in helping to modernize and strengthen their NFCS.

When discussing practical policy applications, he stressed that, in order to

know whether the current regulatory model in the countries will benefit from the use of information from vTPA programmes, there need to be operational vTPA programmes in the country or the intention to establish them by the industry, and a willingness of vTPA programme owners to share that information.

By using the case of the UK, he explained how the vTPA approach can be part of, rather than separate from, the National Food Control System and that the use of data and information from vTPA programmes in some UK food sectors has become an integral part of the UK's NFCS. It has helped to improve food safety and facilitate trade by making more use of, rather than duplicating, industry controls on the basis that a business demonstrating conformity with an industry vTPA standard, is more likely to be meeting regulatory requirements.

Mr Wearne highlighted the economic impact and benefits seen in the UK FSA following the implementation of the vTPA approach in the feed sector. He presented a slide (Figure 3) which showed the cost of the UK official animal feed programme in 2018\19

under three different scenarios. The red box in Figure 3 showed what the costs and inspection numbers would have been if the vTPA approach had not been agreed in 2014; the yellow box showed the impact of the first iteration of the vTPA approach which resulted in a reduction in costs and inspection volumes by over 70%, half of which were being focused on higher risk establishments; and the green box showed the impact of the current improved model, which reduced costs and inspection volumes further. Mr Wearne confirmed that the vTPA approach has resulted in an over 75% per annum reduction in the costs to regulate animal feed but with more resources than previously invested in the inspection of higher risk premises as 78% of the current budget is now targeted at these premises.

To conclude his presentation, Mr. Wearne

summarised the experience of the UK in using vTPA data and the potential it had to improve information on food safety risks, better target available resources and build stakeholder confidence. He called on regulators to consider the possibilities subject to the specific food control issues in their countries and their national regulation and regulatory framework. He encouraged stakeholder engagement and partnership in and within countries, to support more efficient and cost-effective regulatory decision-making.

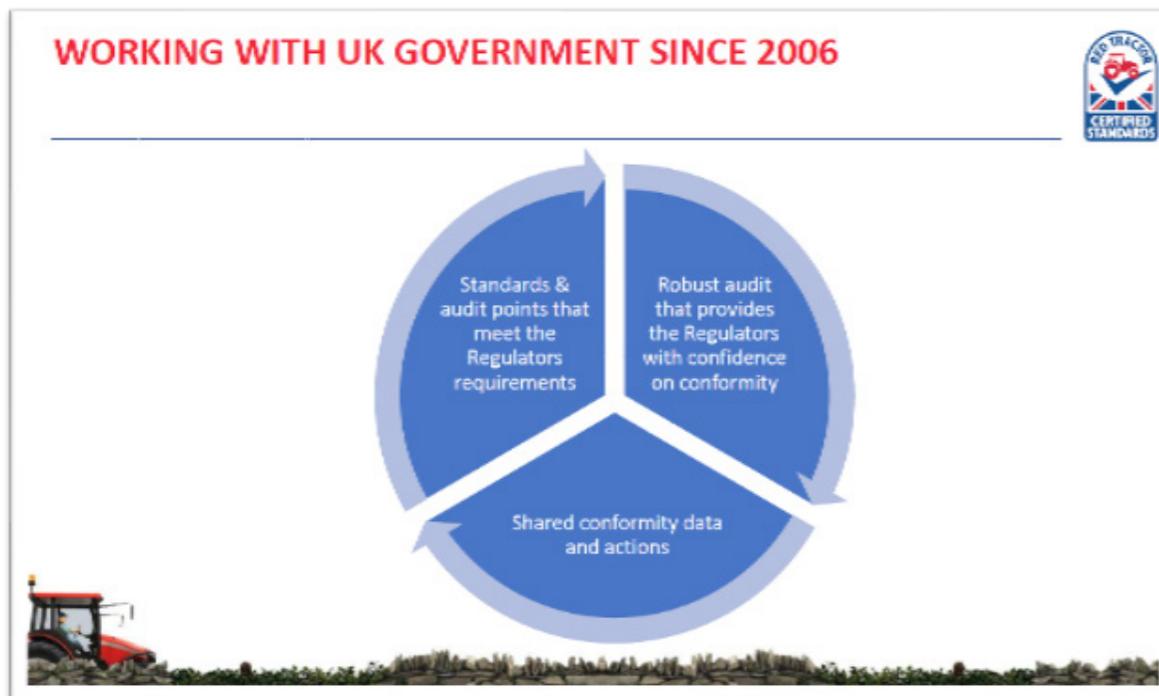


Figure 2. Relationship of Red Tractor with government and government bodies around co-regulation

Impact of ROF Principle Changes to the New Code of Practice (April 2018) on Costs and Inspections					
Criteria	2018/19 New Code April 2018	% Total Cost	2017/18 Old Code May 2014 Required Funding	% Total Cost	2017/18 Delivery actual funding Old Code
Total Cost	£1,039,612		£4,517,443		£1,220,710
Number of Inspections	3,910		21,368		5,395
Number of Premises	144,221		142,598		142,704
Inspections Higher Risk Activities	£810,873	78%	£760,584	20%	£637,932
Inspections Lower Risk Activities	£ 228, 739	22%	£3,756,859	80%	£582,778
					48%

Figure 3. Benefits obtained by the UK FSA after the implementation of the vTPA approach in the feed sector

CONCLUSIONS AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS



Discussions and consultation between the stakeholders

The third day of the forum was devoted exclusively to discussions and consultation between the different stakeholder groups sent. The participants were divided into three groups: the Accreditation Group - the Arab Accreditation Authority; the Food Safety Group - The Arab Task Force on Food Safety; and the Private Sector Group – The Arab Federation for Food Industries.

This first session provided the basis for participants to identify priorities and activities, according to the needs and capacities of the region, with a view to implementing a regional vTPA approach to benefit the food industry, regulators and accreditation bodies. The recommendations reached by each of the sub-groups are reviewed in the following section:

First: Recommendations of the Accreditation Group - the Arab Accreditation Authority

- The Arab Accreditation Authority (ARAC) approves the voluntary third-party assurance initiative in terms of content and mechanisms, and provides all assistance to contribute to its success through the umbrella of multilateral international recognition and its capabilities in its field of work.
- The Arab Accreditation Authority proposes that one of the relevant Arab organizations adopts issuing a guideline and scheme for the vTPA approach to be applied, similar to other systems worldwide, as long as that the agency, in cooperation through its members (accreditation agencies in the Arab countries), provides the accreditation service in accordance with the relevant standard specifications.

Second: Recommendations of the Food Safety Group - The Arab Task Force on Food Safety

Members agree that the Codex Guidelines for Voluntary Third-Party Assurance provide an opportunity for countries to develop their food safety control systems, but the challenge lies in how to implement an approach, especially defining roles and responsibilities including: The role of the competent authority in controlling the relationship between third-party and private sector, as well as the identification and compatibility of third-party responsibilities. As for the opportunities and actions that remain for the voluntary third-party assurance methodology, they are represented in: 1) the practical need to rely on a third-party, 2) the start of implementing similar mechanisms in some countries, 3) strengthening the partnership between the public sector and the private sector.

Regarding the challenges that food safety authorities will face for the successful use of



Discussions and consultation between the stakeholders

voluntary third-party assurance mechanisms in accordance with the Codex Guidelines, they include the following:

- Who is responsible for the third-party, is it governments or the private sector?
- Defining third-party standards;
- The presence of a non-profit entity that can play the role of a third-party to prevent conflict of interest.

The following has been proposed as mechanisms and policies for coordination between the authorities concerned with food safety in each country and the concerned partners and others:

- Putting the topic on the agenda of the next meeting of the Arab Taskforce on Food Safety to discuss it and make the necessary recommendations regarding it;
- Refer to the competent authorities in each country to consult with each other and express an opinion on these guidelines;
- A proposal to discuss the topic within the framework of the agenda of the joint committee between the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) for the

Near East Region;

- Developing an Arabic application guide for the guidelines in a way that harmonizes the characteristics of the Arab region.

With regard to the expected return/benefit, the following was agreed upon:

- Rationalization of resources and capabilities;
- Developing the food safety system;
- Reducing pressure on government agencies, which contributes to focusing on addressing other deficiencies and priorities in the food safety system;
- Building trust between the public and private sectors;
- Wider and more accurate access to information and thus risk management in a more transparent manner;
- It can contribute to facilitating trade and finding common ground between countries.

Regarding the type of support required for the competent authorities to implement the guidelines, it was agreed that the support could take place in phases: the short, medium, and long term. It can also be implemented at a country level. Here the following was suggested:

- The necessity of being acquainted more closely with the experiences of other countries applying the system (regional);
- Implementation of a pilot project on the application of the methodology in the countries of the region (regional - country);
- Organizing regional workshops in which the guidelines are reviewed and discussed in detail, obstacles are identified, and the support required for each stage is defined (regional);
- Implementation of national workshops (country) that include all stakeholders, through which the guidelines are defined, focusing on the importance at the

national level and the support required for implementation (country);

- Activating the work of the Arab Taskforce on Food Safety as the regional authority directly concerned with implementing the methodology (regional).

Third: Recommendations of the Private Sector Group - Arab Federation for Food Industries

- The Arab Federation for Food Industries approves the voluntary third-party assurance initiative in terms of content and mechanisms, and provides all assistance to contribute to its success through the work mechanisms and regulations of the Federation and its members from the relevant federations and effective partners at the country level.
- Adopting the idea of starting regional implementation in the Arab region, given the current status of food safety policies, as well as the difference in the infrastructure and institutional at the country level.
- Organizing field visits to the UK to learn from the experience of Red Tractor, their system followed and the updates made to it as a system for voluntary accreditation by a third-party. Plan visits to the countries that are currently working on preparing the system so that the picture is urgently completed to develop perceptions by the Union in order to start and, with the help of UNIDO, set up the system.
- Starting to prepare updated and realistic data for Arab food factories, according to their production capacities, the type of technology used, and the sources of raw materials for all 17 sectors according to the classification of the union. This allows the preparation of systems compatible

with all sectors and without oppressing small producers.

- Starting in sectors that have many critical points, such as the dairy sectors, red meat processing, and the feed and poultry sector.
- Adopting the slogan "We make it good from the first time", which was launched by the Arab Federation for Food Industries 30 years ago. We suggest that the quality logo of the Arab food industries be put, which can be accepted by all parties, instead of the word voluntary inspection, which may cause panic to manufacturers.
- Finally, the Arab Federation for Food Industries, with its available capabilities and with the help of the esteemed UNIDO, are able to, first, prepare and implement an integrated program in order to enhance the confidence of the Arab consumer in its Arab industry, second, to achieve quality for products, and third, to create new paths for the export of food products to many Arab and international countries.



Discussions and consultation between the stakeholders

ANNEX 1 – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

1. Representatives of Arab countries and regional organizations

First: the Arab team specialized in food safety		
Name	Organisation	Country
Wiem Guissoum	Ministry of Health- National Agency for Health and Environmental Control of Products	Tunisia
Ula Makkawi	Ministry of Agriculture- Head of Food Safety Dept	Sudan
Saadulddin Ali	Ministry of Health- Director of the Nutrition Research Institute / Agency	Iraq
Mousa Alhalaigah	Ministry of Health- Head of Nutrition Department	Palestine
Mariam Eid	Ministry of Agriculture- Head of Agro-Industries Dept.	Lebanon
Omar Zantani	Public Authority for Agriculture, Livestock and Marine Resources	Libya
Zeineb Elbouchikhi	National Health Safety Office for Food Products-Head of Cooperation & Communication Dept.	Morocco
Akram Algeibry	General Organization for Standardization and Metrology-Director of Assessment & Accreditation Department	Yemen
Ahmed O. BaAbdullah	Saudi Food and Drugs Agency- Director of Food Control and Rapid Alert Department	KSA
Mohammed A. Alzaben	Saudi Food and Drugs Agency- Director of Food Control and Rapid Alert Department	KSA
Abdullah Y. AlAjlan	Saudi Food and Drugs Agency- Director of Food Control and Rapid Alert Department	KSA
Khalid Yousuf Al-Sulaiti	Ministry of Public health- Head of the Ports and Food Control Dept. (ATF Chair)	Qatar
Mubarak Saad Alnaemi	Ministry of Public health- Head of the Ports and Food Control Dept.	Qatar
Second: The Arab Accreditation Authority		
Lana Marashdeh	Jordanian Accreditation System (JAS)	Jordan
Yassine BEN WALI	The National Accreditation Council (TUNAC)	Tunisia
Kamal Elhadi Mohamed ABDALLA	Sudanese Accreditation Council (SDAC)	Sudan
Abdelrahman M. R.SHTAYEH	Palestine Accreditation (PALAC)	Palestine
Lina ASSI	Ministry of Economy & Trade- Standards & inspection division	Lebanon
Subhi Mohamed Khalid IBRAHIM	Libyan Accreditation Unit (LIBAC)	Libya
Hany Abdelkader Mahmud ELDESOUKI	The Egyptian Accreditation Council (EGAC)	Egypt
ELORF Brahim	Moroccan Accreditation Service (SEMAC)	Morocco
Muna Manea Ali AL-MAIDAMA	Yemeni Standardization and Metrology Organization (YSMO)	Yemen

El Kharchi Mohamed lemene	Directorate of Standardization and Quality Promotion (DNPQ)	Mauritania
Nourredine BOUDISSA	Algerian Accreditation Body (ALGERAC)	Algeria
Amina Ahmed Mohammed	Emirates International Accreditation Centre (EIAC)	UAE
Third: The Arab Federation for Food Industries		
Hayssam Al-Gaffan	President	Lebanon
Fady Gaber	Secretary General	Jordan
George Khayat	Director of the Regional Office	Jordan
Lina Yacoub	Assistant to the President	Lebanon
Shahat Selim	Egypt Federation of Food Industries- Deputy Executive Director of Government Relations & Legislation	Egypt
Bassam Abu-Ghalyoun	Palestinian Food and agriculture Industries Union- PFAIU- General Manager	Palestine
Khalil Binayea	Iraqi Federation of Industries	Iraq
Foued Ged dich	Chair of Connect International	Tunisia
EL Maati BENAZZOUZ	President of the FENAGRI "Healthy and safe food" commission	Morocco
Badr I. Alabdullatif	Saudi Accreditation	KSA
Abdulrahman. M Alaskar	Saudi Accreditation	KSA
Fourth: The Arab Organizations		
Lamiaa Abdel Wahed	League of Arab States (LAS)	Egypt
Jawaher Sultan	League of Arab States (LAS)	Egypt
Salah Elawad	Arab Organization for Agriculture Development (AOAD)	Sudan
Hussein Elgameely	Arab Organization for Agriculture Development (AOAD)	Jordan
Fedaa Alrawabdeh	Arab Organization for Agriculture Development (AOAD)	Jordan
Shadwa Saad	Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO)	Morocco
Amir Elrufai	Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO)	Morocco
Ahmed Eddouaicer	Arab Industrial Development, Standardization and Mining Organization (AIDSMO)	Morocco

2. International experts

Name	Organisation	Country
Steve Wearne	Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission	UK
John Barnes	UNIDO Senior Expert	UK
Mike O'Neill	Former head of Local Delivery, UK Food Standards Agency / Head of Codex Policy and Strategy, Food Standards Agency of the United Kingdom (UK FSA)	UK
Jim Moseley	CEO of Red Tractor	UK

3. Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

Name	Organisation	Country
Rebecca Ygberg Amayra	Regional Programme Manager	Jordan
Maria Selin	Regional Director	Jordan

4. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Name	Organisation	Country
Ali Badarneh	Food Security and Food Systems Unit Chief	Austria
Raed Alomari	Project Assistant	Austria
Mohamed Salama	Reg. Senior Communication Coordinator	Egypt
Shaimaa Amasha	Regional Programme Officer and PMU Team Leader	Egypt
Gabor Molnar	Industrial Development Expert	Austria
Natalia Fernandez Cedi	Project Coordinator	Austria
Sulafa Mdanat	Country Representative	Jordan
Maya Zidan		Jordan
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